



MEERA.ai

AI *for* Admissions

How to **recover** the lost enrollments sitting in your CRM.

8932 lost leads?

Meera AI work in progress

3656 leads recovered!



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In about 20 minutes, you can explore the ways an intelligent text messaging automation platform can help you reach students, nurture conversations, and reduce the repetitive, tedious busywork that robs your admission team's time.

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In spring 2022

17.9

million students were enrolled
at a postsecondary institution

In 2022

467,643

students were enrolled in for-profit
certificate-granting institutions ⁴

Certificate-granting institutions
have a median enrollment of

143

Students ⁴

Introduction

How many potential enrollments are hidden in your CRM? One of our recent clients picked up an **additional 49 applications** within two months of launching Meera to engage with their aged leads.

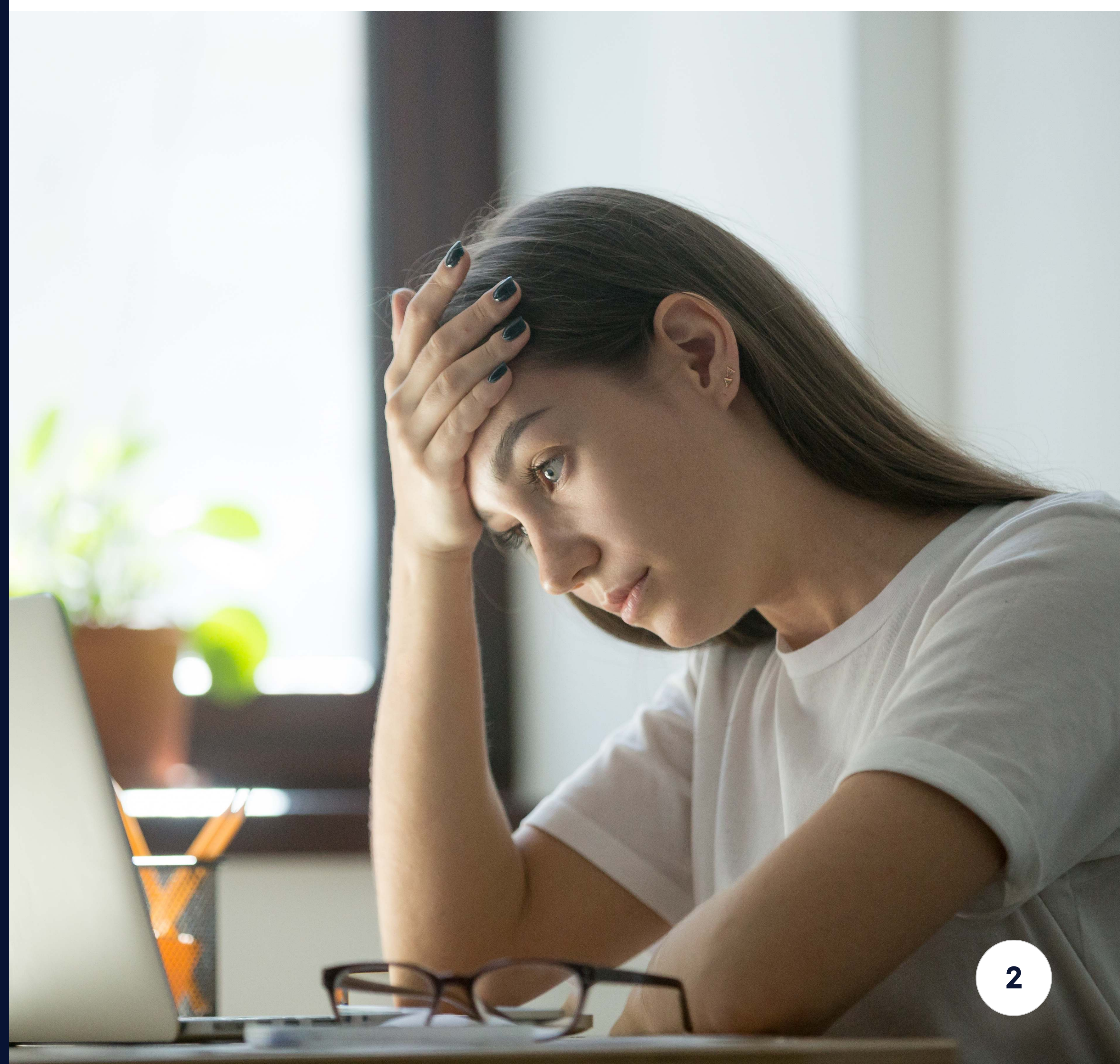
No matter what kind of institution, prospective students are harder than ever before to attract and hold on to. Your database of student inquiries, applications, and other contacts contains many more possible students than have actually enrolled or started classes. **Even among admitted students, as many as 60% never start classes.**

They've simply fallen through cracks in the admissions process.

Not long ago, those lost students would be just that: lost. Email conversations trickle out, outbound calls may go straight to voicemail, and other means of reaching out to students such as impersonal text blasts may simply be ignored.

Manual contact methods like these also suffer because they're not scalable—potential students are not always available, spawning the need for ever more follow-ups.

Today, though, there's a way to turn many of those potential students into actual students, and discover value for your school and students themselves by reactivating the inquiries you've already collected.



Why You **Aren't** Getting The Most From Your Contacts Database

Why aren't the inquiries in your database utilized as well as they could be? It's largely a function of the limited time that enrollment officers have to complete the wide range of tasks they're called upon to do—chief among them, conversion.

As new inquiries enter your system, last week's fresh inquiries become this week's aged ones. Each of your admissions officers is more than simply busy. They're dealing not just with reaching out to new contacts, but nurturing those students with an application in process.

That means they're collecting documents, following up by phone or email, and answering questions from those already committed applicants and students.

They're also trying to connect with students at different points in their lives and careers. The time these hands-on tasks require helps explain why the **cost of recruiting an undergraduate approaches \$3,000**.

No matter how well student inquiries are tracked, limited time means a limited ability to follow up. As each inquiry ages, the odds drop that the student it represents will enroll, and the probability rises that the student will feel they've been abandoned.

When each representative has too much to do, older student inquiries are an obvious place where their efforts will be limited by necessity.

A 2022 survey found that

44%

Gen Zers check their notifications within a minute of receiving a text. ⁷



Interest Doesn't Always Mean Application—Or Enrollment

The reasons that students end up not applying, not enrolling even after a successful application process, or canceling before classes start, are as varied as the students themselves.

Following up with potential students to understand why they didn't continue the process, and to explain your school's value to them, is crucial. That means other institutions with engagement platforms more capable than yours may be enrolling the students you aren't.

For some potential students, the major issue is cost; they might be more interested in a less-expensive school, even if you have financial aid packages or other price incentives that would make your school their best alternative.

Students may simply not be aware of their options, and so reluctantly abandon their applications. That may be before they've even taken the first steps to see a financial aid counselor or review a plan.

Other students face challenges like time-consuming day jobs, family responsibilities which make the transition to student life more difficult, or medical emergencies which rule out starting when they intended.

Some would-be students may have had to move before the start date of classes, and are simply too far to attend in person. If your school offers online classes instead, they might be missing out on them.

The biggest reason that students don't continue, though, is fear. A lack of response or support only hurts each potential student's confidence, and leaves them in the dark about what they could or should do next.

Engaging those students to rekindle their interest with targeted messaging could transform their lives and future careers.



In Lancaster, PA. alone,

43%

of 2021 high school graduates intending to go to college didn't enroll that fall. ⁵

Spotting And Triaging Your Aging Inquiries

Inquiries that go silent are a disservice to your admissions team and your potential students. To start a path toward reviving some of those inquiries, you'll need an active plan to engage them, and you'll need to quantify just how many your CRM has actually captured, and **spot the factors that describe the students you're missing out on.**

You Can Start By Running Reports That Reveal:

- ❖ How many uncontacted inquiries are 3 to 6 months old?
- ❖ How many prospective students have no next action assigned?
- ❖ How many students canceled or rescheduled interviews, or missed them entirely?
- ❖ How many interviews resulted in no application?
- ❖ How many follow-up tasks have your representatives been unable to complete?
- ❖ How many students are recent high school grads, transfer students, or career changers?

You may be surprised by how many inquiries have no next action assigned, how many tasks have expired, or just how overwhelming the list of active tasks is.



The Solution: Use Conversational AI To Revive Older Student Inquiries

You know that your contacts contain a gold mine of interest. But since your representatives are under the same time constraints as always, you'll need a way to engage students that leaves your team free to devote their time to the freshest inquiries, too.

By using automated conversational AI over regular text messaging, you can both engage students on the channel they most prefer for communication, and have **automated, yet human-feeling conversations**.

The immediacy and high deliverability of text messages means you're far more likely to reach students than you are with email or voice calls.

And while admissions officers often employ texting as a way to engage individual students, it's not feasible to manually reply by text to all of your older student inquiries.

A well-chosen engagement platform will give your message maximum exposure.

With automation focusing first on these older leads, you sidestep the need to integrate all of your processes with an AI-driven system. It's a fast, low-friction way to up your enrollment.



86%

of students reported that they completed an otherwise undone task because they were prompted by a text message ⁸

Revive Aging Inquiries With Conversational AI In 5 Steps

1

Choose (or develop) an AI platform that can engage students in natural, friendly language over text.

2

Set up an aged-inquiries campaign, to target those students your team doesn't have the time to follow up with manually. Complete a script for messaging potential students.

3

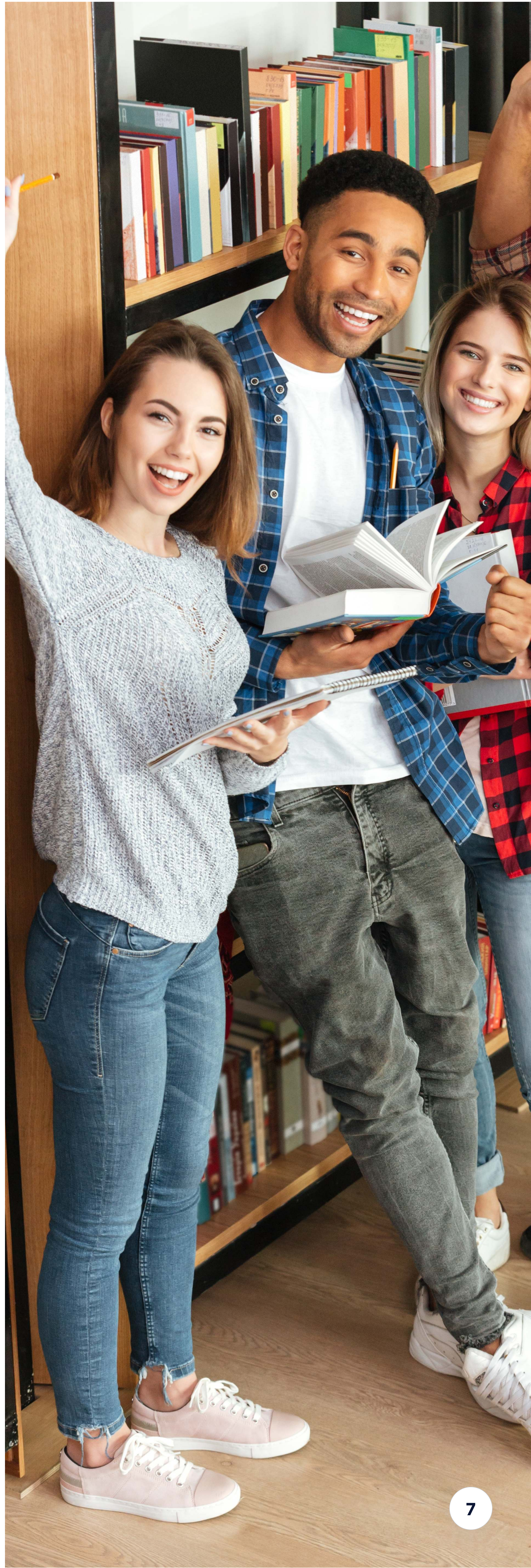
Ensure deliverability, and that your message has a read rate of over 98%; design an automation campaign to ensure your messages won't annoy your contacts, and aren't so frequent that it drives down their deliverability.

4

Ensure your platform can understand intent and can engage in an automated conversation that's compliant both with applicable regulations and with your own internal messaging

5

Configure a digital assistant to call both student and representative automatically at the scheduled time, for a zero-wait connection.



1

Choose (Or Develop) An AI System

The most difficult part of engaging older student inquiries is also the most important. You'll need to purchase (outright, or as a service) an AI system that can interact with students in an engaging, human-like way—or you'll need to develop your own.

A useful AI is one that can engage in conversations and understand your contact's intent and sentiment. Compared to a purely menu-driven system, this means your AI must be able to recognize and interpret a wide range of vocabulary and communications styles, and figure out what each word means in context.

This requires that the system be trained on a wide range of conversation types and relevant inputs.

The great news is that texting is a channel uniquely well suited to this task, and that ready-made solutions exist, so you can choose to skip the months (or much longer) it might take to develop, test, and integrate an adequate AI engine.



Set Up An Aged-Inquiries Campaign

While your admissions team concentrates its efforts on the most current inquiries from potential students, you can set up a low-impact campaign using text to focus on your aging inquiries instead.

First, select a tranche of inquiries by their age (such as all inquiries for the current academic year that are older than one week, or all inquiries between two and eight weeks old).

Prepare a texting script for these potential students that reminds them that they've expressed curiosity about your program, or that they at least started an application, and to spark a renewal of interest.

Without some kind of followup like this, in many cases you may never know just why a student didn't enroll in your program.



Ensure Deliverability

Perhaps the most crucial element of any communication via texting is deliverability: You need to know your message can get through in the first place.

Naive texting automation systems may wreck deliverability by blasting your contact list with too many or badly timed messages.

If the sent messages are too frequent, are sent at inappropriate times, or contain content that anti-spam systems recognize as being sent to thousands of recipients, fewer of your texts will get through.

To ensure high delivery, choose a platform that responds in a timely, natural, and customized way, so every conversation is unique.

A well-designed messaging system will also allow you to time your message to maximize the convenience for your contacts; if you're sending important messages to high school students, for instance, you may focus on the hours just after the end of the school day.



Hey Ben, Mia here from Art University. Spring semester registration are open. Do you have a few mins to go over it now?

Sure

Great! Calling you in few minutes

Ensure Your Platform Can Understand Intent

When your scripting is done, test it out with in-house staff playing the role of inquiring students and against a corpus of likely inquiry paths. Be sure that messages are arriving quickly to each contact's phone, and that the resulting conversation feels human-like.

Critically, ensure your platform can understand intent in the student's texted responses. If a student asks "What's the application deadline for next semester?" or "When's the next time I could visit in person?", the responses should be on-point.

With that in place, your system is ready to hold a conversation automatically that's compliant both with applicable regulations and with your own internal messaging.

Unlike human applications officers who might convey different thoughts based on their own knowledge or routines, an AI system can present a unified information flow – but it needs to be populated with the right information, so this testing is just as important.



Configure A Digital Assistant

When it's time to elevate the conversation from conversational AI and texting to a human representative, you want the most efficient connection possible. You can either design and configure your own system from scratch, or select an out-of-box solution that's part of your text engagement system itself.

With a platform that incorporates a digital assistant, there's no need to manually schedule a call, or wait on the line for the inquiring student to pick up.

The digital assistant can be configured to eliminate that lag, by calling both student and representative automatically at the scheduled time, for a zero-wait calling experience.

Your AI platform can also transparently deal with rescheduling calls, at the request of the inquiring student or the representative, without complicating your team's calendar. This helps turn your aging inquiries into potential enrollments with the least necessary manual intervention.



Case Study: Penn Foster

Penn Foster College, established as the first distance-learning institution in the United States, saw admissions drop notably after a period of strong post-COVID enrollment figures. The school converted only 1.5% of their student inquiries more than a week old.

Penn Foster Senior Paid Media Account Manager Alicia Slachta realized that conversational texting would enable the school to revisit and convert those aging inquiries, by engaging potential students with details about immediate enrollment opportunities, rather than only high-level information about the school's programs.

It would also allow the school to reach its prime demographic of 25-34-year-olds without requiring them to answer a voice call or an email.

Slachta initiated a trial of Meera's AI-backed platform with just two departments, addressing only those formerly abandoned week-plus leads.

Result:

47% Increase in lead to enrollment rate

\$1.2m Increase in revenue



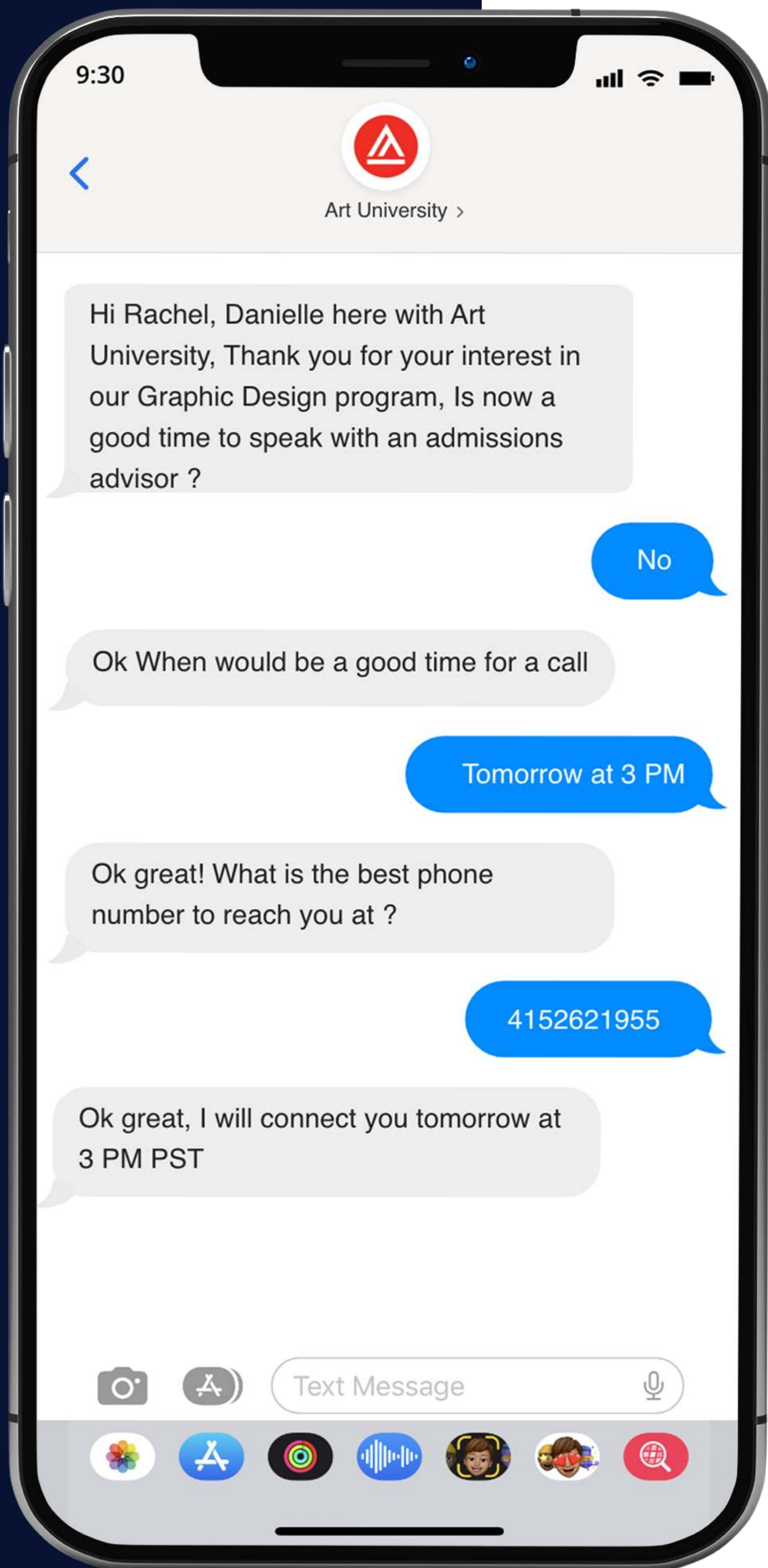


Where Recovered Inquires Can Lead

If you're able to convert even a small percentage of your formerly discarded inquiries into applications and then into enrollments, that means you've recovered value from your current database. What's next? Once in place, a conversational AI platform can do much more than contact aging inquiries. It can also:

- ❖ Serve as a general-purpose call scheduler, to book meetings with academic advisors, to register students, or to engage with students for greater persistence
- ❖ Orchestrate events, from announcement to collecting RSVPs and post-event follow-ups
- ❖ Conduct surveys
- ❖ Deliver important updates or alerts to all affected students

With these capabilities, you can implement attendance-based or last warning campaigns, giving students the ability to schedule appointments with an academic advisor—or be transferred to them instantly.



Conversational AI From Meera.AI

Meera is a conversational AI platform that works like a digital Admissions/Academic Advisor assistant.

It automates and scales human-feeling conversations over SMS or WhatsApp text. Meera humanizes text conversations at scale and makes it more manageable than traditional text automation.

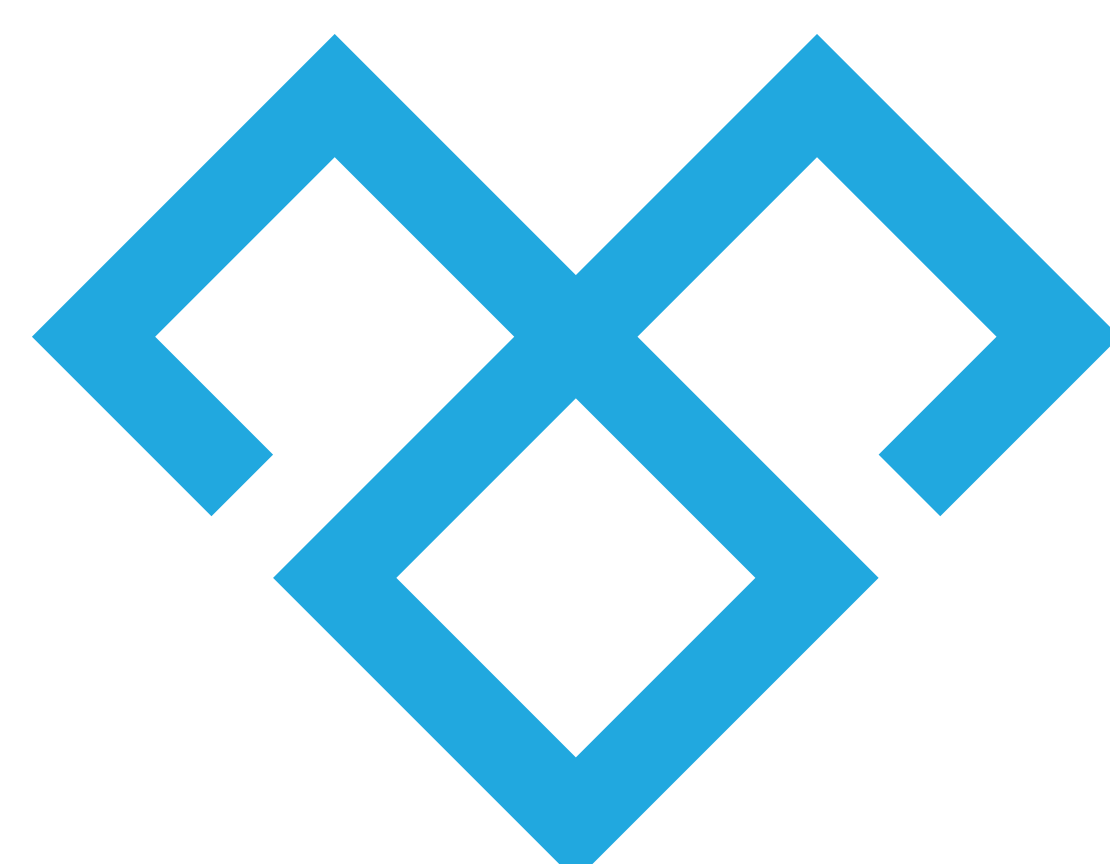
Engage your contacts, schedule calls or appointments, and answer inquiries over students' best-liked channel, at their pace and on their schedule.

With aged leads in particular, Meera clients have seen a 20-30% response rate, with about half of those leads turning into qualified calls.

Imagine having an unlimited number of admissions assistants engaging, following up, and transferring calls to your admissions reps!

Meera leadership includes more than 30 years of experience in the higher-education admissions field.

Contact us to see how conversational AI can find new value in your aging student inquiries in less than two weeks.



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